



Birds are “reservoir hosts,” meaning the virus can survive in the bird’s blood system and through the bite of a mosquito, be spread to humans and animals, including other birds. Humans and other mammals are considered “incidental” or “dead-end” hosts, meaning that mosquitoes biting infected humans cannot spread the infection to other humans or animals.

Although rare, West Nile virus has been transmitted through blood transfusions, organ donations and breast milk.

What can I do to protect myself and my family from being bitten by mosquitoes?

- When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when you are outdoors with babies.
- Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk and in the early evening, which are peak mosquito-biting times.
- Install or repair tight-fitting window and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.
- Apply insect repellent in moderation to exposed skin. Choose a repellent that contains DEET (*N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide* or *N, N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide*) in a concentration that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors. **Whenever you use an insecticide or insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer’s DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product.** Avoid applying repellent to the hands of children.
- Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. **Do not apply repellents containing permethrin directly to exposed skin.**

NOTE: Vitamin B-1 and “ultrasonic” devices are NOT effective in preventing mosquito bites.



More info:

Santa Clara County Vector Control District:

800-314-2427 or 408-792-5010

<http://www.sccvector.org>

<http://westnile.ca.gov>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile>

<http://www.sccphd.org>



Santa Clara County
Public Health Department

A division of Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System



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1/03 33K JMc

WEST NILE VIRUS:



Target the source.



West Nile virus – What is it?

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus, carried in the female mosquito. Although new to the U.S., West Nile virus has been found for several years in parts of Asia, eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. First detected in the United States in 1999 in New York City, West Nile virus was reported in 28 states by the end of 2001 and continued its move westward in 2002. California reported its first human case in September 2002 although it is unclear how or where the patient acquired West Nile virus since no infected birds or mosquitoes were detected prior to or following the detection of the case.

Who is affected by West Nile virus?

Humans and animals, including birds may all be affected by West Nile virus. The majority of people and animals infected with the virus have mild or no symptoms.

Those most at risk are the elderly and those who have compromised or weakened immune systems.

What are the symptoms of West Nile virus infection?

Most people who are infected with the West Nile virus will not experience any type of illness. Mild symptoms include fever, headache and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms of mild illness will generally last a few days. Severe symptoms of West Nile encephalitis or meningitis include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis. Symptoms of severe illness may last several weeks, although neurological effects may be permanent. It is estimated that 1 in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop a more severe form of the illness.

How does West Nile virus spread?

West Nile virus is normally spread to humans, animals and birds through the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito first acquires the infection by feeding on a bird already infected with West Nile virus. The virus lives in the mosquito and is then transmitted through the mosquito’s saliva when it bites a person or an animal.

Protect yourself and your family.



What is Santa Clara County doing to prevent West Nile virus?

West Nile virus cannot be prevented from entering Santa Clara County. Controlling the mosquito population in the county will reduce the chance of people being bit by mosquitoes that could be carrying West Nile virus. The Santa Clara County Vector Control District (SCCVCD) routinely surveys for mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus. Santa Clara County has maintained a mosquito abatement program since 1918. This includes routinely checking the hundreds of miles of creeks and waterways and more than 30,000 storm drains for developing mosquitoes, treating when necessary.

In addition to efforts to keep down mosquito populations, SCCVCD also has surveillance for the presence of viruses which cause human disease. Adult female mosquitoes are trapped and tested for these viruses. Also, since the primary carrier of West Nile virus and other strains of encephalitis virus is a mosquito which prefers to feed on birds, sentinel chicken flocks are placed throughout the county and tested for infection every two weeks during times of high mosquito activity, usually spring through early fall. The SCCVCD also collects and submits dead birds to the California Department of Health Services to be tested for West Nile virus.

SCCVCD also provides free home and yard inspections for mosquito sources as well as free mosquito-eating fish to interested residents.

The Santa Clara County Public Health Department has educated the physician community in the county about the signs and symptoms of West Nile virus. This educational campaign provides physicians with information they need to identify early cases of West Nile virus infection, if needed.

As a steward of many of the creeks, reservoirs, wetlands and ponds in the county, the Santa Clara Valley Water District works collaboratively with SCCVCD and the public health department to identify and report mosquito problems and educate the public about the virus.

Target the source.



What can I do to fight West Nile virus?

- Routinely check and eliminate any standing water in your yard. Remember, water an inch deep can produce hundreds of mosquitoes. Use the list and picture in this brochure to check your yard.
- Report neglected or abandoned swimming pools, hot tubs or fish ponds to the Santa Clara County Vector Control District.
- If you find a bird that has recently died, particularly a crow or other corvid (i.e., jay, magpie, raven) please call 408-792-5010. SCCVCD will arrange for pickup and testing when appropriate.
- Contact the SCCVCD if you are experiencing problems with mosquitoes.
- Contact the SCCVCD for a speaker on West Nile virus for your homeowners or neighborhood association, or civic group.

Protect yourself and your family.